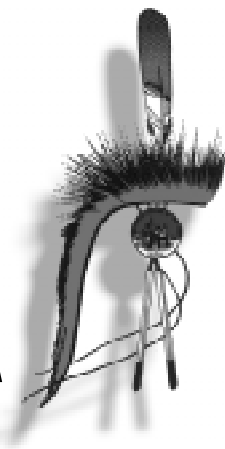


KANZA SPIRIT

931ST AIR REFUELING GROUP



Inside

• Reserve recruiters play the numbers game
Page 4

• 931st CE constructs 'Total Force'
Pages 6, 7

• Kanza kid kicks her way to fame
Page 8

McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas

May 2000

Up front

Group names quarterly winners

By Staff Sgt.
Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

The 931st Air Refueling Group selected its most recent batch of award winners at the April commander's call.

Col. Daniel Opp, 931st ARG Commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Billy Mead, 931st ARG Command Chief Master Sergeant, handed out the awards and congratulated each recipient on a job well done.

The group's latest award winners are: **Senior Airman Brad Fields**, Airman of the Quarter; **Tech. Sgt. Morris Findley**, NCO of the Quarter; **Master Sgt. John Johnston**, Senior NCO of the Quarter.

Each winner will go on to compete for the group's annual awards early next year.

Rodeo 2000: 931st buckaroos head for worldwide competition

By Staff Sgt. David Brumley
Kanza Spirit Staff Writer

A group of "Kanza cowboys" will put on their spurs and hit the trail in just a few days when they head to Rodeo 2000, the biennial international tanker-airlift competition. The 14-man team, consisting of two separate aircrew and maintenance squads, will go head to head with other teams from more than a dozen countries at the weeklong contest held this year through May 13 at Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

Capt. Tony Harris will lead the 931st Air Refueling Group team into the fray, and although he's one of the newest members of the unit (having just left active duty), he said he felt good about the team's chances at this year's competition.

Senior Master Sgt. Lloyd Campbell, 931st Aircraft Generation Squadron, is heading up the maintenance squad. He radiated confidence when asked for his prediction for his team, saying their only goal is "to bring home a trophy."

Rodeo has its roots in competitions between C-124



Staff Sgt. Jason Whited

The 931st Air Refueling Group Rodeo Team. Bottom row: SrA Joseph Reid, Tech Sgt. Albert Ryder, Senior Master Sgt. Lloyd Campbell, Master Sgt. John Boulett, Tech. Sgt. James Kirk, Tech. Sgt. Gary Justice, Top row: Master Sgt. Mark Allen, Master Sgt. Wade Jones, Tech. Sgt. Ernest Goethe, Senior Master Sgt. William Stacey, Lt. Mark Myers, Tech. Sgt. John Wallman, Capt. Tony Harris (Team Chief), and Capt. Allen Conard.

Globemaster II units held in the early 60s. Back then, aircrews used to compete with one another in high-pressure, precision airdrop contests. Through the years, the competitions became a more formal affair, and each year more and more units flying a wider variety of jets took part in the event, eager to "show their stuff" and prove they were the best in the world.

This year's Rodeo will include more than 100 teams of active duty, Reserve and Guard troops and more than 80 aircraft, including C-141s, KC-135s, C-130s, C-5s, C-17s, and C-9s. More than 2,500 people will compete in this year's Rodeo.

Editor's note: For more information on Rodeo 2000, surf over to www.pope.af.mil/R2K/index.htm and watch for our Rodeo recap in the June issue.

A few last words

By Lt. Col. Ellis Yoder

931st ARG

Deputy Commander

Since Col. Opp has a very full agenda for the next month or so, I've offered to help him out by writing the "commander comments" for this month. It also gives me the opportunity to pass on a few final words of wisdom to those who serve our great nation in the 931st Air Refueling Group.

A fond farewell

The April UTA marked my last UTA before my retirement from the Air Force Reserve, and I want to thank everyone who made it a memorable weekend. I appreciated the great retirement party, farewell gifts and most of all, the kind words and comments that were made to me and my family during the weekend and following my retirement ceremony. I'll never forget the great people I've been fortunate enough to work with for 28 years in the USAF and its various components. From Officer Training School in 1972 through the 931st ARG in 2000, I've made countless friends and made great memories that I'll be able to enjoy for the rest of my life.

Changing times

I've seen a lot of changes in the Air Force since I joined in 1972. When I began my career, there were no female crewmembers flying the line, we wore tan colored uniforms, (they were called 1505s), and the workhorse airframes were the C-130s, KC-135s, and B-52s. Oops... I guess that part hasn't changed. There have been many significant changes to those

airframes, however. Anyway, the Vietnam War was still going strong and air navigation was challenging work. Navigators were greatly respected and appreciated in those days, especially while crossing the "pond." Well, change is usually for the good and I'm glad we have opened the crew entry doors to women. I'm glad we have different uniforms and that the Vietnam War is a distant memory. And with the integrated inertial navigation and GPS systems of today, I have to admit, the navigator isn't needed quite as much as he once was. I do feel fortunate to have been able to "navigate" airplanes around the skies right up to the day I retired.

A strong force

But, as they say, some things never change. One I've noticed is that free people who are governed under some type of democratic system don't start wars. Wars seem to always start as the result of some dictator not controlling his temptation to gain more power and control over people. Another is that the need for a strong U.S. military force is as important now as it has ever been. Although the Cold War is over, I'm afraid the so-called "peace dividend" hasn't quite turned out to be what everyone had expected. Although I'd rather our country not be the world's policeman any more than anyone else, let's face it, we are the strongest nation in the world today and if we don't stand up to tyranny around the world, no one else will either. If we do stand up against it, however, other nations will join us and together



Lt. Col. Ellis Yoder

we can perhaps increase the number of people in this world who enjoy the freedoms and democratic way of life that we have all grown up with and take for granted. If we are successful in that endeavor, then I believe we do indeed increase the security of our own nation for generations to come.

I salute you!

Although I am retiring from an active role in our country's armed forces, I will never stop being a proponent for a strong national defense. I know from experience that the men and women who wear the uniform of our country are dedicated, professional and extremely capable individuals who will get the mission done to the best of their ability. But I also know there is a limit to what can be done with a few good men and women. While all of you continue to faithfully serve our country, I will be doing what I can to persuade Washington to increase the manning levels of our armed forces. It's the least I can do to help solve what I believe to be the biggest problem our military faces today.

In the mean time, keep up the good work and I wish you all the best. I also hope you all enjoy your AF careers as much as I enjoyed mine.

KANZA
SPIRIT 931st AIR REFUELING GROUP

Vol. 5, No. 5

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Deadlines

The deadline to submit articles and newsbriefs for publication is the 20th of each month.

Legal info

This funded Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for member of the U.S. military services.

Contents of the *Kanza Spirit* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of the Air Force.

Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 931st Public Affairs Office.

All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.



Toll-free number makes for easier billeting reservations

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

A new toll-free telephone number should give McConnell reservists an alternative way to make UTA billeting reservations. Installed April 10, this new number will allow reservists who in the past had to rely on their unit billeting monitors to make hotel reservation changes for them to reserve their own rooms.

"We feel this new number will really simplify things and eliminate many of the problems the group had under the old system," said Maj. Terri Kett, 931st Air Refueling Group Executive Officer and point person for the new billeting hotline. "In the past we would sometimes run into problems when someone had to cancel a

reservation or we had a no-show. When this happened, the group would be charged for a room that no one had even used."

By calling the billeting hotline, reservists can ensure they make the right reservation because they're in control. By simply leaving their name, rank, unit, specific lodging request and a number where they can be reached, reservists can rest assured that they'll have a room ready for them when they arrive at McConnell for their UTA, said group officials. If for some reason, reservations have to be changed because a troop is unable to make it to the UTA,

no problem. All he'll have to do is call the hotline again, leave all the required info with either a staff member or the answering service, and all arrangements will be changed. It's that simple. There's no need to worry that the reservations won't be changed or that people will be charged for a room they never slept in.

The new hotline will apply to all 931st units except the 931st Civil Engineering Squadron. "CE will continue to use their present system," said Kett, adding that group officials don't see the need to fix something that isn't broken.

However, all other 931st reservists who stay either in billeting or in a downtown hotel for UTAs will be required to use the hotline, and 931st leaders want to make sure they get the point.

Airmen who fail to cancel their reservations and wind up as a no-show will be billed for the unused room. A second no-show in the same year will result in that member being denied unit funded billeting for six months.

However, Kett doesn't foresee any major problems with the new billeting number. "It's so easy to use, why wouldn't you want to take advantage of the hotline?"

For more information on the new billeting number, contact Master Sgt. Valerie Adkins or Kett at 759-3728.

**931st billeting hotline
(888) 708-3885**

DOD vacation club offers reservists worldwide travel

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The terms "cheap" and "vacation" don't often go together, but the Armed Forces Vacation Club manages the feat.

The club started Aug. 1, 1999, offering active and reserve military ID cardholders, military retirees

DOD civilian personnel overseas. The company also opened a club Web site at www.afvclub.com to make it easier to book a condo.

To book a \$209 vacation, check the Web site and make your selections. Then call the

**Check out the
Armed Forces
Vacation Club at
www.afvclub.com**

club's toll-free number, (800) 724-9988. Give the vacation counselor your name, the number of

and DOD civilians vacations in resorts around the world for \$209 per week. More than 1,000 people have used the club to date.

Mike Overfelt, vice president of Cendant Alliance Marketing, said the company has opened the program to service members and

people traveling with you, your service and your installation. Be prepared to give at least three choices of places you want to go and times and have a credit card handy.

Travellers can choose from a variety of domestic or overseas locations to visit -- anywhere



U. S. Air Force photo

Through the Armed forces Vacation Club, reservists can ski the slopes of Switzerland or explore the African savannah for \$209 a week.

from the sandy white beaches of Florida's Gulf Coast to the snowy resorts of Sweden is open to vacationers.

Overfelt suggested checking

the Web site often for up-to-date info on destinations. Because of the popularity of the resorts, availability changes often, he added.



As a strong economy continues to lure young people away from potential military service, Air Force Reserve recruiting officials are hoping a new approach to attracting and training recruiters will help the command win...

The numbers game

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

While a robust economy and low unemployment have been great for the country as a whole, everything hasn't been so rosy for the Air Force Reserve. Units across the country have struggled to meet recruiting goals in recent years, unable to compete with the booming civilian job market and attract enough new recruits to fill open slots. Last year, things took a turn for the worse. Despite their best efforts, Reserve recruiters were only able to sign up 81 percent of the more than 11,000 new airmen they needed in fiscal 1999.

Despite the sagging numbers, Air Force Reserve Command officials have refused to throw up their hands in frustration and point fingers at recruiters.

Instead, members of the AFRC Recruiting Training Branch have launched a new strategy — changing the way they attract and train new recruiters in the belief that enticing a new generation of airman requires a new approach.

According to Maj. Scott Ostrow, chief of the AFRC Recruiting Training Branch, everything from how the command signs up new recruiters to how it sells the Air Force Reserve to potential recruits has been revamped. "We needed to make a change," he said, adding that officials realized using recruiting techniques that hadn't been updated in decades while expecting the same number of men and women to sign up for either a recruiting job or their first hitch in uniform was unrealistic — especially since



U. S. Air Force photo

Master Sgt. David McCormick, 931st Air Refueling Group recruiter, talks to a potential bluesuiter.

both existing troops and new recruits are often part of the same modern generation.

Recruiting the Recruiter

As part of this new approach, AFRC officials are now using a new "Recruit the Recruiter" program to get the word out that full-time recruiting jobs throughout the command are still open. In what amounts to an all-out internal media blitz, recruiting headquarters is running an article and related advertisement in every reserve unit's newspaper or magazine, inviting anyone who is interested to apply for a recruiting job. In addition, all reservists and guardsmen receive a sort of "help wanted" message once a quarter with

their Leave and Earnings Statements.

According to Ostrow, applicants do not need prior recruiting experience to be selected. All they really need is a belief in the Air Force Reserve as a great way of life, a good attitude and the ability to project a professional image. The Reserve provides all necessary training — each applicant who is selected is sent to a five-week training course at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, during which they are given the tools they'll need to compete with the Air Force's sister services in a tight job market. Why do reserve officials feel the need to run an all-out ad campaign to attract recruiters?

See NUMBERS, Page 11

Missing the Mark

Last year, each branch of the service except the Marine Corps had trouble convincing young Americans to sign up.

The Air Force missed its fiscal 1999 goal by 1,800 recruits, even though it increased the amount of money it poured into recruiting by 28 percent for an average of more than \$5,400 for each new bluesuiter.



Fiscal 1999

 = 500 airmen

Source: National Center for Policy Analysis



New options to pay government travel card bills

By **Danita Hunter**

*Air Mobility Command
Public Affairs*

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — Gone could be the days of writing checks, licking stamps and relying on the U.S. Postal Service to deliver the money to pay government travel charge card bills to the Bank of America.

Two new options are making that method of paying obsolete. Now, bills can be paid electronically, either by the traveler via telephone or by the travel pay office when the travel voucher is paid.

In one new method, the traveler can pick up the phone, dial (800) 472-1424 and "speed pay" the bill directly from his or her bank account, after a little set-up work is done — like providing the bank's routing number and the checking account number. This can be done from anywhere 24-hours-a-day.

Another option is for the travel pay office to pay the bill when the travel voucher or interim travel voucher — if the

TDY is more than 45 days — is paid. To do this, the traveler checks the "split disbursement" block at the top of the Department of Defense Form 1351-2 and fills in the amount to be sent to the charge card account. Any money not sent to pay the travel card bill will be sent to the traveler's bank account. If there is a balance remaining on the charge card, the traveler will be billed for it at the end of the billing cycle. If the traveler pays too much to the charge card, the traveler can call the 800 number and request a refund for the credit balance be issued. It's as simple as that.

No checks, no stamps, no bills to mail.

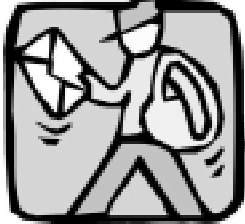
Travelers gone for more than 45 days are authorized an interim payment to pay for accrued travel expenses. The interim, or accrual voucher, provides the traveler funds to pay the government travel card bill.


For instance, Air Mobility Command policy is to identify travelers who will be TDY for more than 45 days and establish the amount, recipient and

Paying the Travel Charge Bill

Method 1: Snail Mail


1. Write a check
2. Stuff check in envelope
3. Lick stamp
4. Mail the bill through US Postal Service






Method 2: Speed Pay

1. Dial 1-800-472-1424
2. Bill is paid from bank account



Method 3: Split Disbursement

1. Check box on top of DD Form 1351-2
2. Bill is paid from travel pay settlement



Source: HQ AMC/PM

By Danita L. Hunter

timing of the interim payment before the traveler leaves home. The process should be simple, reliable and, above all, a benefit to the traveler.

The amount travelers receive will be determined by the authorized entitlement and the anticipated lodging and

transportation expenses. The traveler may choose either to have the money deposited into a personal bank account and either write a check or phone in the payment, or to elect split-disbursement on the travel voucher and have the bill paid automatically.

Adverse reactions to anthrax vaccine still minimal

By **Capt. James Bishop**

*Air Force Reserve Command
Public Affairs*

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. -- Despite concerns and high-visibility refusals surrounding the anthrax vaccination, the number of those reporting reactions remains low.

As of March 29, of the nearly 1.6 million doses of anthrax vaccine given to service members, only 674 individuals have submitted reports of

adverse reactions Surgeon General's office.

With at least 10 countries, including Iraq and Russia, actively producing anthrax for use as a biological weapon, anthrax is a known and real threat, "It would be morally irresponsible for Air Force leaders and the entire Department of Defense not to protect our troops against this lethal threat," said Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Paul Carlton Jr., Air Force surgeon general.

A special thanks

While inprocessing during the March UTA (his first with the 931st Air Refueling Group) Staff Sgt. David Lumadue, 931st Civil Engineering Squadron, learned of a death in his immediate family. Because of the help and support of him during this difficult time, Lumadue would like to extend his thanks everyone who helped him and his family. In particular, Lumadue expressed gratitude to 1st Lt. Martha Kuder, Tech. Sgt. Tina Proulx and Chaplain (Maj.) Charles Peterson.

"The efforts of these personnel and the contributions from group members proved to me Chief Mead's claim -- in regard to taking care of its members, the 931st ARG is truly the best in the Air force Reserve," he said.

"I and my family will be forever grateful to all who helped us during this difficult time," he added.



By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

While some still wonder if the Total Force will ever work as advertised, a handful of Reserve, active duty, and Air National Guard civil engineers have stopped wondering about it and started working at it. Reaching across lines that have traditionally separated them, these McConnell airmen have spent the last year developing a chemical and biological decontamination system they believe will not only help save lives of airmen around the world but will prove that the idea of a Total Force is a workable reality.

The 10-man team, led by Reserve civil engineers from McConnell's 931st Air Refueling Group, and including airmen from the 22nd Air Refueling Wing and the Kansas Air National Guard's 184th Bomb Wing, has spent the last year overcoming prejudices and misperceptions each unit had about the others and has formed the close working relationships officials insist are necessary for the Air Force to become a Total

McConnell civil engineers shape Total Force

Force.

Formed in late 1998, McConnell leaders tasked the team with developing a way for troops to decontaminate themselves and their uniforms in the event of a chemical or biological attack. Up to that point, none of the three units had a viable system (the 22nd ARW came closest), and base officials were looking for something they could use to both train airmen how to decontaminate themselves during exercises and to take with them on real-world deployments. Working overtime after the regular duty day had ended, on weekends and any other time they could find, the

team, led by Tech Sgt. Morris Findley, 931st Civil Engineer Squadron chief of readiness, brainstormed and finally came up with the idea of buying raw materials themselves and building a system based on their own design.

Team members worked side by side for months throwing around ideas, creating and then scrapping various concepts, until they hit upon the idea of using PVC pipe and plastic containers to build something resembling an assembly line where troops could go from station to station, decontaminating and removing different items of clothing at each stop.

"We found that our system was cost-effective, easy to repair and superior to any outside system that was available," said Findley. "It's also easy to palletize, and we can adapt it for any situation we're in - including the three different groundcrew ensembles in the inventory."

Base officials were so impressed with the system that all three units, the 931st ARG, the 22nd ARW and the 184th BW, adopted it as the system their troops will use. In addition to adopting this so-called "contamination control area" system as their standard, base leaders believed the team's invention was good enough to

become the standard for the entire Air Force.

Word of a good thing travels fast in the military and before long, Findley and his team were on the road demonstrating their CCA system for everyone from officials at the Air Force Civil Engineer Support Agency to Pentagon brass. Officials who examined the McConnell system



Photos courtesy of

A McConnell civil engineer works on the contamination control area system during a recent demonstration. The system was praised by Air Force officials from the Pentagon.



A Kansas Air National Guardsman processes through the CCA system during an exercise last year. McConnell officials said they are impressed at how well reservists, active duty troops and Guardsmen have worked together.



ivil engineers orce into reality



...y of Tech. Sgt. Morris Findley
...er sets up the new
...ea system during a
...ne system has been
...cials as well as top brass

liked what they saw. Master Sgt. Sam Love, AFCESE readiness plans manager, said there are many good things about the system.

"It was easy to put up, it was lightweight - it was a really inventive idea," he said. It was the first system I've seen come through the Air Force suggestion program that

complied with the regs."

AFCESE officials said that although the McConnell system probably won't become the Air Force standard (a commercially manufactured system has already been approved), the initiative and creativity the McConnell troops showed was impressive.

Captain Joe Wible, 931st ARG performance planner, who assisted the team as its "facilitator" — and coordinated all the money, equipment and anything else members needed to succeed — said the system is so effective it's even being considered by the Kuwaiti military as their official CCA system. "This team is one of the best I've ever seen," he said. "These guys have set the standard with this project."

Wible added that McConnell leadership has been so impressed with both the team and their new CCA system, the entire project has been submitted for this year's Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award. Wible predicts victory for the team. "This is the first operational project I've seen that actually used the quality tools to develop a great product. Their results speak for themselves."

Although team members said they feel good about meeting their goal and being able to gel as one unit, they added that it

took a concerted effort to succeed. According to Findley, bumps in the road existed, but team members refused to let those bumps become roadblocks on the path toward a Total Force effort. They were more like small speed bumps. "We actually came together very well, and a support net for one another developed" said Findley, adding that by the time the team had revised the system and demonstrated it for Pentagon officials in February, the top brass "couldn't tell who was Guard, Reserve or active duty."

That sense of teamwork has carried over into the day-to-day operations of each of the base's three CE units as well, said Findley. "There's a lot of sharing information," he added. "I'll teach a class for the 22nd during the week when they need help, and they help us on weekends - and the Guard is very helpful with the mask fit program."

"This (cooperation) has worked out very well," said Senior Master Sgt. Robert

Homan, 184th BW point man for the project. "Once we started really working together, you didn't realize that there were people from different units - it's all been a team effort."

Active duty team members agree with Findley and Homan. "It's been great," said Staff Sgt. Richard Williams, 22nd CES. "All of us working together was pretty easy."

Team members agreed the project was a victory for the Total Force, and they added they now look forward to working together. "We're all actually helping each other out on a regular basis," said Findley. "We no longer view one another as Guard, active duty or Reserve, but as readiness troops with the same goals and responsibilities."

McConnell leaders have been as impressed with their troops' performance as they've been with the CCA system itself. "These guys have really come together and proven that the Total Force is an idea whose time has come," said Col. Daniel Opp, 931st ARG Commander. "Today's Total Force commitment means standing together with our active duty and Guard brothers and sisters to ensure we accomplish our mission. The 931st was proud to take the lead on this project, and we all look forward to continuing to build these relationships for the betterment of all three units and the Air Force as a whole."



The entire CCA system is so mobile and easy to set up that it fits into one small crate.



Kanza karate kid

Daughter of 931st sergeant
to represent Kansas at national
Tae Kwon Do competition

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

Take one look at 13-year-old Nikki Housman, and you'd never know she's actually a living, breathing fighting machine.

This quiet, unassuming teenager is like many other girls her age. She loves listening to pop music, she enjoys school (her favorite subject is Social Studies), she fights with her younger sister and she's already started thinking about boys (although she won't be allowed to date for years).

Nikki's days are occupied by the same things that occupied most teens: school, friends, homework and family. But when the last class is over and Nikki's done with teachers and books for the day, her nights take on a different feel. Nikki changes. Something else takes over. Nikki the all-American teenager becomes Nikki the steely-eyed warrior.

Most nights, when her chores and schoolwork are done, she slips out of her jeans and into her uniform: wide legged white cotton pants with matching shirt, bright red belt — and a thousand yard stare. Nikki is ready to rumble.

Since she was in the third grade, this mild-mannered daughter of Master Sgt. Mack Housman, 931st Mission Support Flight Chief of Personnel Systems, has trained

in Tae Kwon Do, a Korean martial art characterized by its fast movements in which the hands and feet can be used as deadly weapons. Each day (sometimes for up to two hours at a time), Nikki practices her kicks and her punches, stabbing at the air with hands and feet — each day becoming a little more proficient, a little more skilled...a little more dangerous.

All this work and dedication have evidently paid off, because this summer, Nikki will represent Kansas at the United

competition. "I've been practicing, so I feel pretty confident," she said.

And Nikki should feel confident, according her Tae Kwon Do instructor, Darryl Gruenke. "Her chances are really better than most," he said. "Her skill level is high and she has a good foundation in Tae Kwon Do." Gruenke has seen her ability grow with her age, and has been teaching martial arts for more than eight years. studies Tae Kwon Do and is himself an expert in the sport, agrees with Gruenke and adds that he's pleased with her progress. "Of course, I'm very proud of her," said Mack. "She's stuck with this, and has never let her schoolwork get sidetracked. She's also become more fit and has gained more self-confidence through Tae Kwon Do."

When she placed first in her division at the K a n s a s championships back in February, Nikki said she felt great — because she knew that the nationals were her next step. "I was really excited," she says breathlessly between kicks.

Mack, whose has another daughter learning the sport, 11-year-old Sammi, conceded it's a little unusual to have two girls interested in what some consider to be a violent activity, but he insists he never pushed his daughters into joining him in Tae Kwon Do. "I didn't force any of this on them," he said.



11-year-old Sammi, 13-year-old Nikki and Mack Housman

States Junior Olympic Tae Kwon Do Championships in San Antonio. This "Kanza warrior" will join scores of others her age who have traveled to the week-long competition in the hopes they can show they represent the next generation of Tae Kwon Do masters.

Although Nikki has a long way to go before she can call herself a martial arts master, she says she's optimistic about the



Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Nikki Housman throws a kick
"Both of them chose to do this — and I'm proud of them for it."

Mack said that in addition to learning self-control, integrity, courtesy and perseverance, knowing his girls know how to land a quick punch or land a swift kick puts his mind at ease. "I know that later (in life) they'll be able to take care of themselves," he added with a smile.

As the competition nears, Nikki doesn't intend to do anything different to prepare. She's going to stick with what got her to this point: long hours of practice. Although she tries to sound modest when asked if she thinks she'll take first place, a broad smile comes across her face as she takes a quick break from a kicking exercise to rate her chances. As some of the red faced grown men in her class gasp for air during the short rest, Nikki looks around the room, calmly sighs and brushes her hair back from her eyes. "I think my chances are good," she says.



Commissary Web site offers convenience

FORT LEE, Va. — Say, for instance, your family has just moved to a new base and you need to know how late the local commissary is open. You could try calling and dealing with the endless choices offered by the base switchboard operator. But wouldn't it be much easier to punch up info about your local store on the Internet without having to go through an elaborate search?

Well, now you can. The relatively new (launched in fall 1999) Commissaries.com offers just about any information you could be looking for about your local commissary in one central site. Individual links will take you to any commissary store in the system.

Individual store sites have a wealth of information about what's available in your local store. There is basic information such as store hours, directions to the store, which credit cards the store accepts, and the store manager's e-mail address. The sites also have space for the local managers to personalize and bring attention to any special features their stores offer.

For instance, the Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, store offers a full-service deli and bakery, featuring made-to-order deli sandwiches, party trays and special-occasion decorated cakes. The commissary at Fort Belvoir, Va., features a full-

service seafood department, an in-store bank and rotisserie chicken.

The Belvoir store's site also boasts that their commissary was the winner of the best meat department in a northern commissary in 1999. This type of information might be particularly helpful to someone trying to decide which commissary to patronize in the crowded Washington, D.C., area. And these are just two examples chosen at random.

The great thing about these individual sites is that the individual store managers edit them — not someone in the Defense Commissary Agency headquarters at Fort Lee. This allows the stores to put up more personalized information about their features and allows them to make changes instantly. If the info about an individual store is wrong, the store managers have no one but themselves to blame.

Besides information on individual stores, the site has a number of helpful features. Perhaps the most useful is a listing of sale items for the current week. Law prohibits commissaries from advertising their prices outside the stores, but this site lists sales by the percentage off the regular price. The site lists nearly 200 sale items, which might be a valuable resource to use in planning a shopping list or menus for the week. The sale items are broken down into convenient categories, making navigating the long list fairly easy.

Other useful pages on the site explain the history of the commissary system, how much commissary users can expect to save over civilian grocery stores, and what the 5 percent surcharge is used for.

As a service to customers, the commissary folks have also included links to nearly 30 free recipe sites, 40 other government sites, and several grocery, food safety and small business sites.

Air Force launches new fuel card system at Barksdale

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La., — Barksdale's 2nd Supply Squadron became the first unit in the Air Force to test and use a new fuel purchase tracking program April 9.

Called the Automated Data Collection System, the new program uses an Air Card assigned to each aircraft for purchasing fuel.

"It will reduce paperwork, save money and enhance the flying hour program," said Master Sgt. Melvin French, 2nd SUPS. "Now we are using this card here at Barksdale to record aircraft billing information and all fuel sales."

The Air Card is a commercial credit card pilots and aircrews can use to purchase fuel at commercial airports. It is presently accepted at 4,200 locations worldwide.

Aerospace fuels management people put card terminals in



U. S. Air Force photo
Staff Sgt. Terrell Parfait, 2nd Supply Squadron fuels flight, Barksdale Air Force Base, La., scans one of the new fuel cards before fueling an aircraft.

Barksdale's fuel trucks Feb. 22 through March 5 and tested the system from March 8 to April 8.

The system reads the Defense Department-issued Air Cards and then begins fueling. Once the refueling operation is completed, the transaction is sent via radio to the fuels computer.

Being the test base was a challenge for the fuels flight, French said.

"We had to do twice as much work in order to ensure the information ...was the same as the manual entries. Of course when you are testing, you incur more errors than you normally do. But, once it is completed, you can be proud that you had a part in creating something the entire Air Force fuels community will use," he said.



Spirit Shorts

Need to outprocess?

If you or someone you know needs to outprocess for a TDY, reassignment or retirement, remember the Military Pay Office is only open on UTA Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Thinking ahead can ensure you don't have to come back to base during the week to finish all that boring outprocessing stuff! You can get it done during the UTA!

For more info, contact Tech. Sgt. Anick Wallace in Relocations at Ext. 3665.

Fill out that Form No. 93!

The DD Form 93 provides information on the primary next of kin, secondary next of kin and other persons to notify in case of your death.

This form also serves as the official document required by law for designating beneficiaries for death gratuity pay and unpaid pay and allowances.

Cheery stuff, huh?

Members should take this requirement seriously and fill it out as soon as possible to ensure their families receive all they're entitled to.

MPF in-house training

The MPF is closed each Sunday of the UTA from 7:30 to 10 a.m. for in-house training. Training classes are held in the TNET room (Room No.217), and all administrative personnel are welcome to attend.

NCO Academy dates

We only have three slots remaining for this fiscal year, one in July and two in

September. Interested staff sergeants with eight years' time in service and tech. sergeants may contact Group Training at Ext. 5423 for specific dates / locations as well as application procedures.

Movin' on up

Congratulations to the following people for completing Professional Military Education or formal technical training.

Master Sgt. Mark McGougan completed the Senior NCO Academy in residence.

Master Sgt. Gary Cook, 18th Air Refueling Squadron, completed the SNCOA.

Tech. Sgt. John Wallman, 18th ARS, completed the NCO Academy.

Senior Airmen Chris Stearns and Joe Reid, 931st Aircraft Generation Squadron, completed Airman Leadership School.

Senior Airman Paul Peek, 931st Civil Engineering Squadron, completed ALS.

Staff Sgt. Tim Calhoun, 931st AGS, completed Crew Chief 7-level school

Staff Sgt. Steve Tucker, 931st AGS, completed Hydraulics 7-level school

Airman 1st Class Richard Caron, 931st AGS, completed Hydraulics 3-level school

Staff Sgt. Mike Dysinger, 931st AGS, completed Comm-Nav 3-level school

Senior Airman Brandon Mildren, 931st Mission Support Flight, completed Security Forces 3-level school

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Staff Sgt. Amber Kamm is retraining to be an In-Flight Refueler.

Spirit Spotlight Senior Airman Brad Fields 931st Security Forces

This month's Spotlight selectee comes to use from the 931st Security Forces Flight. This Columbus, Ohio native has been in the Air Force for more than eight years and works as a combat arms instructor.



Staff Sgt. David Brumley

Senior Airman Brad Fields gives a fellow airman some advice during an M-16 rifle qualification shoot.

Civilian job: Boeing electrical modification mechanic

Favorite way to relax: Spending a quiet day outdoors

What I'm reading now: "He Still Moves Stones" by Max Lucado

Easiest way to annoy me: Don't follow traffic laws

If I won \$1 million, I would: Have all my debts cleared, give 10 percent to an organization, invest the rest and live off the interest

NCO Leadership Development Course

The following dates / locations are available for the NCOLDP course:

Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., 5 - 9 June 5-9 and July 10-14 (must attend both weeks)

Ft. Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas, September 16-24

Contact Group Training at Ext. 5423 for more details.

Human Resource Development Council

Did you know the council has a lending library of self-improvement materials available for your use? Group Training has a complete listing.



Spirit Shorts

Commissioning opportunities

A commissioning board will convene this summer to select two people from the 507th Air Refueling Wing to become second lieutenants in Military Equal Opportunity and Intelligence.

Packages are due by June 1, and interested people should contact Tech. Sgt. Thelma Herrera at Ext. 3625 for more information and a copy of the Deserving Airman Commissioning Guide.

Applicants must meet eligibility criteria as defined in Air Force Instruction No. 36-2005.

Upcoming UTAs

Here's a list of the upcoming UTAs:

June 10,11
July 15,16
August 5,6
September 9,10
October 14,15
November 4,5
December 9,10

Fitness Walk

The 931st Group Walk to Fitness has been scheduled for May 6 at 3 p.m. beginning in front of Building No. 850.

Bring yourself, work-out clothes and walking shoes -- you'll get off work early, you'll be able to join your friends in a healthy activity and you'll make your unit look good by getting the highest stats on the fitness test. You must see your unit fitness monitor and complete an Air Force Form No. 48 by noon to get credit for the test.

NUMBERS, continued from Page 4

In the past, said Ostrow, the command relied on reservists looking for full-time employment to volunteer for recruiting slots. Often, airmen quickly filled openings. "It was a good way to get a full-time job," explained Ostrow.

However, as the economy picked up and people left the Reserve for higher paying full-time civilian jobs, the command's pool of potential recruiters dried up a bit. Today, more than a dozen recruiting jobs remain open with no one to fill them.

To convince more airmen to volunteer, Reserve officials are outlining what they call an "attractive" benefits package designed to get more bluesuiters to agree to do the job. Benefits for reserve recruiters include full-time pay and allowances, an extra \$375 a month in special duty pay, the right to carry the green ID card and all the privileges and benefits associated with it and in some areas of the country, the possibility of government-leased housing. Ostrow also pointed out that the Reserve also offers a more attractive rank structure and higher promotion rate than active duty troops.

Recruiting officials hope this new marketing campaign will bring in enough new blood to help the Reserve fix its most pressing problem: attracting new airmen.

The bottom line

In addition to changing the way it attracts recruiters, the

Reserve has also re-tooled the way it markets military service to a new generation of young Americans, according to Ostrow. To this end, AFRC partnered with a civilian company, the Brooks Group, to change from the old "tried and true" recruiting techniques to a what Ostrow termed a "new, more customer-focused way of selling."

"This is not some 'out of the box' approach," said Ostrow. "This is a way of selling that has been customized just for the Reserve."

Reserve recruiters are now trained in a new way to talk to potential airmen - how to connect with them across generational lines and emphasize more what their country can do for them than what they can do for their country.

According to recruiters in the field, the new approach is a huge step in the right direction.

"This new approach is something we really needed," said Senior Master Sgt. Terry Gosh, a recruiter assigned to the 440th Airlift Wing in Milwaukee, Wis. "Kids don't need us like they used to. Nowadays, the patriotism just isn't there, and things like training and education that they used to come to us for they can get from someone else."

Senior troops like Gosh who have lived through the "lean times" and watched the Reserve struggle to sign up enough airmen in recent years aren't the

only ones who are excited about the way new recruiters are trained. The newbies themselves are just as optimistic about the tools they've been given to compete against other branches and civilian companies for new hires.

Tech. Sgt. Brian Jackson, who has pounded the pavement for only about six months in Brooklyn looking for recruits oozes excitement and enthusiasm when he talks about how he was trained to bring in new bluesuiters. "We were definitely taught how to communicate effectively," he recalled. Jackson said officials made sure he knew how to compete for the attention of today's young people and how to "distill" his pitch to a few central ideas. "We now definitely focus on what we can do for them," he said.

The Reserve believes this updated approach will pay off. "Our people already put more new people in per recruiter than any other branch," said Ostrow, adding that officials think the command just needs more newly trained recruiters to meet its annual goals.

Recruiters themselves agree. "We can't keep doing things the same way," said Gosh. "I'm glad this (program) isn't gonna go away like some initiatives have in the past. Am I optimistic that we can make our numbers and introduce the Reserve to a whole new generation with this modern way of doing business? Oh, yeah!"

Have a story idea?
Call the Spirit Staff at Ext. 3616!



Wichita Weekend

Cinco de Mayo

Saturday and Sunday,
Evergreen Park, 265-0490; Old
Town Farm & Art Market, 722-
8965

25th Annual Polkatennia

Friday-Sunday, The Cotillion
Ballroom, 11120 W. Kellogg,
722-4201. 3pm -midnight Fri;
noon-midnight Sat.; 11-7 Sun.
Admission \$9. for Friday and
Sunday; \$11 Saturday.

Park City Blue Grass Festival

Friday-Sunday, Kansas
Coliseum, I-135, Exit No.17 at
35th St. N. Annual Park City
Bluegrass Festival features
traditional bluegrass music and
performers. \$15-40, Select-A-
Seat 755-SEAT(7328). 744-
2026



Staff Sgt. David Brumley

A fine finish

Maj. Randy Brink, Maj. C.D. Wilson and Senior Master
Sgt. Monsa Dugger hose down Maj. Art Roveto after his
fini-flight last month. Roveto was one of the first
members of the 18th Air Refueling Squadron when it
stood up at McConnell in 1995.

Old Town Barbecue Cookoff

Saturday, Old Town, Info:
D.J. Burk, 262-3555. Feast on
lip-smackin' barbecue and vote
for the best.

Wichita Pops Concert

Saturday, Century II, 225 W.
Douglas. Enjoy the exciting
sounds of the 1926 WurliTzer
theater organ. Adm: \$12 each;
season tickets, \$30, 755-
SEAT(7328)

Flick picks

The following movies will be
showing at the base theater
during the May UTA:

Friday

"The Ninth Gate" (R)
2 hours, 7 minutes

Saturday

"Anna and the King" (PG-13)
2 hours, 29 minutes

Sunday

"Here on Earth" (PG-13)
1 hour, 36 minutes

Other area theaters:

Cinemas East 6: 684-2805
Towne East 4: 685-1121
Towne East 2: 681-2717
Cinemas West: 729-5665
Towne West 5: 945-5093
Northrock 14: 636-5432
Northrock 6: 636-5431
Palace: 721-7949
Premier Palace: 691-9700
Warren Theater: 721-9545

931st ARG/PA
53280 Topeka Street
Suite 221
McConnell AFB, KS 67221-3767

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